

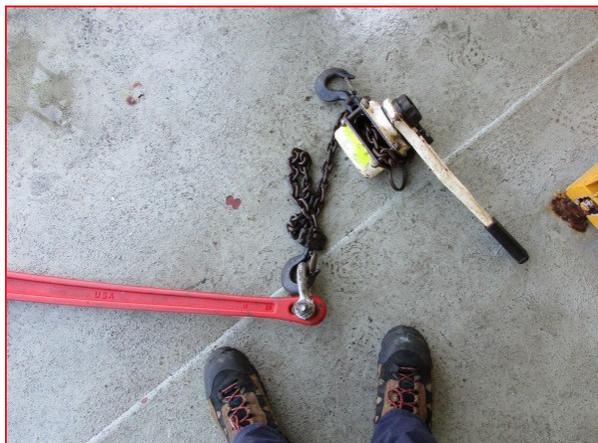
SAFETY ALERT



Safety Alert No. 359
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Unsafe Use of Pipe Wrenches Discovered during Inspection



(top left) Pipe wrench that was likely bent due to improper use of a come-along, (top right) bent pipe wrench showing shackle to which come-along was attached, (middle left) wrench with chain and come-along attached, (middle right) close-up of the come-along, (bottom left) close up of the shackle to which the chain and come-along were attached.

During a recent inspection, a crew performing decommissioning work was torquing pipe wrenches by using "come-along" units attached to shackles which were installed in the "hanging holes" of the wrenches. Two wrenches were found bent and twisted from use and with broken or missing teeth.

Manufacturer specification sheets specifically forbid the use of come-along units due to the increased risk of "equipment damage and failure from overload" and note that such improper use "increases the risk of striking, crushing or other serious injury." Manufacturers also advise that bent pipe wrenches "should never be straightened" and that wrenches "with a bent or twisted handle should be taken out of service."

Therefore, BSEE recommends that operators consider the following:

- Do not use come-alongs, chain hoists, backhoes, drill rigs or other mechanical, hydraulic or powered devices with pipe wrenches.
- Do not use come-alongs, chain hoists, backhoes, drill rigs or other mechanical, hydraulic or powered devices to install or remove fittings.
- Do not use pipe wrenches with a threading machine to install or remove (make or break) fittings. This can cause striking or crushing injuries.
- Treat pipe wrenches as hand tools designed to be used solely by hand. Improper use of pipe wrenches can result in tool and equipment damage and failure from overload and increases the risk of striking, crushing or other serious injury.
- Do not use wrenches with bent or twisted handles. A bent handle indicates that the wrench has been overloaded and is damaged. A bent handle should never be straightened. Take damaged wrenches out of service.
- Do not modify or alter a pipe wrench. This may lead to tool failure and serious injury.
- Do not overreach when using a pipe wrench. Keep proper footing and balance at all times to promote better control of the tool in unexpected situations.
- Do not use a pipe wrench as a hammer.
- Do not apply a side load to the pipe wrench handle.
- Do not use a pipe wrench as a lever, pry bar, lifting device or bender.
- Do not use a pipe wrench on hard, square, hexagonal or other non-round material.
- Inspect your contractors' tools before and during jobs. Ensure that the tools are being used safely and properly, and have not been damaged.

-- BSEE--

A Safety Alert is a tool used by BSEE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding a potential safety issue. It also contains recommendations that could assist avoiding potential incidents on the Outer Continental Shelf.